

MINEHEAD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S INTERIM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1942.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH CIRCULAR NO. 2067.

In accordance with the instructions contained in Circular 2067 all statistics are omitted from this report which deals shortly with matters of public health and the extraordinary conditions affecting such matters.

The normal population of the area is still greatly augmented. There is a considerable fluctuating portion consisting of both military and civilian. The military section is not within our jurisdiction.

The self evacuated have not returned to their own habitations as rapidly as was expected; in fact this moiety of the population is about stationary. Although the town's accommodation may be said to be saturated, there is little, if any, overcrowding.

The water supply is now entirely satisfactory in quantity and quality. The new source which was added to the town's supply in December 1941, having passed the necessary tests, has met the very considerable demands of the increased population without any strain.

The sanitation of the town has been carried on satisfactorily and the existing sewers have been equal to the demands.

The third year of the War has undoubtedly begun to exert an influence on the higher ages of the community. Restrictions in diet and insufficient domestic assistance, combined with the depression inseparable from a long War and accentuated by the black-out and its interference with ventilation, have led to increased illness amongst those from 65 upwards. The total deaths have shown a definite increase.

The incidence of infective coryza was very marked and its pulmonary complications gave rise to a great deal of illness. The doctors still remaining in the town were very much overworked.

Epidemic diseases as usual appeared, the most serious of them being scarlet fever. Practically all the cases were treated at the Isolation Hospital. There were no deaths from epidemic disease.

Tuberculosis appears to be still on the increase, but with the increase in the evacuated population it is almost impossible to determine the statistical value of this.

Venereal disease is not within the purview of the Local Authority, but is dealt with by the County Council.

Child Welfare is dealt with at the Welfare Centre under the direction of Dr Chappel who is also in charge of the Ante-Natal Clinic.

Maternity cases evacuated to the district under the County Council were dealt with at the Sherwood House Maternity Home. Self evacuated cases were treated either at the Local nursing homes or in the Hospital. All cases of difficult labour, including evacuated patients, were dealt with at the Minehead Hospital. The births showed a considerable increase.

Scabies and pediculi capitis have not been a source of much trouble.

The response to the campaign to encourage diphtheria immunisation has been satisfactory.

Owing to the presence of evacuated schools the proportion of juvenile population is still high. Under the circumstances the general health of the population may be said to be satisfactory.

W. BAIN, M.B.,E.S.,Lond.,

Medical Officer of Health.

July 1943.